

Report of a Pre-school Inspection
Glenbrook Nursery School

October 2024



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1. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Glenbrook Nursery School is situated in the Glen estate in Newtownards. There are fifty-three children attending the nursery, with almost all coming from the immediate area. Fifty percent of the children have free school meals entitlement and a small number of children have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN). There are eight staff members in total, one-half of whom are employed on a full-time basis and a majority of whom have been appointed within the past year.

The school's motto 'Together we learn, together we play' supports staff to build relationships at all levels and to meet the holistic needs of each child.

B. VIEWS OF PARENTS AND STAFF

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) issued online confidential questionnaires to parents and staff in advance of the inspection. A significant minority of staff (38%) and parents (42%) responded to the questionnaires and all of their responses were wholly positive. Of the staff that responded, two-thirds provided written comments which praised the welcoming environment and their appreciation of being part of a strong, supportive and encouraging team. Almost one-quarter of the parents (24%) who responded to the questionnaire provided written comments, all of which were very positive and appreciative of: the caring and welcoming staff; the nurturing learning environment; the effective and regular communication; and their children's enjoyment of school.

C. THE PROCESS OF INSPECTION

The ETI worked alongside Glenbrook Nursery School to consider how well the school:

- has identified and articulates its vision;
- prioritises actions to achieve the vision;
- overcomes the main challenges it faces;
- monitors and reviews progression to identify, celebrate and embed success; and
- grows and develops an inclusive community of learning.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Glenbrook Nursery School is committed to the personal, social, emotional and educational development of each child, and to living out their motto Together we learn, together we play.

- The rigorous and honest self-evaluation process is informed by the views of the whole school community and identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and staff professional learning. It is now timely to simplify the action planning process to identify more specific and manageable targets.
- The staff have intentionally planned for and created a stimulating and enabling learning environment which includes a range of authentic and natural resources. This planning supports well the children's holistic development and progression in learning across all six areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The individual needs of the children are identified, monitored closely and met through a range of effective partnerships, a robust process of observation and assessment, and skilful interactions of staff.
- Almost all of the children are developing very well their curiosity, independence and social skills as they engage actively in purposeful and sustained high-quality play.
- At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the nursery school demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

Area for consideration:

- to simplify the action planning process to identify more specific and manageable targets.

3. MAIN REPORT

A. SETTING THE VISION

Glenbrook Nursery School is committed to the personal, social, emotional and educational development of each child. All staff, through living out their motto Together we learn, together we play, strive to support the children to develop their self-awareness, self-confidence, resilience and an ability to understand and manage their own emotions.

Owing to the number of new appointments, of both teaching and support staff, the building of relationships at all levels and the development of a robust approach to self-evaluation were prioritised appropriately in the previous academic year. As a result, a rigorous and honest process of self-evaluation has been established which values the views of the whole school community, identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and informs an associated programme of staff professional learning. It is now timely to simplify the action planning process to ensure specific and manageable targets are set and monitored.

The well-established and well-informed board of governors plays an integral role in the life and work of the school. The governors are committed to the children and their parents, the staff and the wider school community. They have a wide range of valuable skills, knowledge and experience that they bring to their role.

B. IMPLEMENTING AND IMPROVING TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is well-resourced, attractive and stimulating. The organisation of the day, layout of the rooms and wide variety of authentic resources and learning opportunities: promote the children's independence and social skills; develop their curiosity in each other and in their surroundings; and support their emotional and physical health and wellbeing. The skilful and supportive staff are respectful of the children; they listen with interest to them and value their opinions. Through their positive interactions with the children, they encourage them to think, problem-solve and make good choices.

There is a comprehensive cycle of planning, observation and assessment in place which guides well the learning and teaching across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and monitors effectively each child's development and progression in learning. The staff reflect regularly on their practice and on the quality of the children's learning experiences. As a result of effective self-evaluation, the children's physical development, their outdoor learning experiences and the opportunities for them to give their views have all improved. To reflect these changes in practice and to guide further improvement, the staff have begun to review their planning and amend accordingly.

C. BUILDING EQUITY

There is a wholly inclusive and nurturing ethos in the school where all children are listened to, valued and supported to reach their full potential. As a result of the importance placed on working in partnership with parents, a range of allied health and educational professionals, and with Sure Start providers, the staff know the children and their starting points very well. In addition to these partnerships, the robust induction and settling-in processes, records of ongoing observations and individual monitoring, all aid the staff in the planning for and meeting very effectively the individual needs of each child. The targets and associated achievement criteria and support strategies in the personal learning plans (PLPs) are clear and relevant and inform appropriately the provision for individual children.

D. DEFINING, CELEBRATING AND EMBEDDING SUCCESS

Almost all of the children are making very good progress in their learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Their personal, social and emotional skills are very well developed. They are very well-settled and navigate the daily routines and transitions around the playroom, and from indoor to outdoor play, with ease. The children are respectful of each other, the nursery staff and their environment. Almost all of them engage in creative and investigative play for extended periods of time and are developing well their perseverance, independence, curiosity and friendships.

The children's opinions and ideas are sought, listened to and valued. Staff collate, share and celebrate the children's work and achievements through the attractive displays in the playroom, the children's individual portfolios and memory books, and engagement with parents using digital platforms, notice boards, and stay-and-play sessions. Children are invited to choose which of their creations they wish to photograph and display on the 'Caught on Camera' in-class display which they can also add to their individual portfolios.

E. GROWING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

Working relationships at all levels within Glenbrook Nursery School are supportive and respectful and the staff are proud to be members of this cohesive team. They are committed to the children and their families and strengthening further their partnerships with the wider community that they serve. As a result of the strength of the internal relationships, and the wide range of effective external partnerships with parents, other early years settings and other professionals, a strong culture of capacity building for all exists. This is characterised through for example, the parental workshops on healthy eating and paediatric first aid, and staff capacity building on physical development, outdoor learning and promoting positive behaviour, all of which are impacting positively on the children's experiences. All permanent members of staff completed the forest school training programme last year and are awaiting their Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) accreditation.

F. CHILD PROTECTION

At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the school demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

4. GOING FORWARD

All staff and governors at Glenbrook Nursery School are committed to the personal, social, emotional and educational development of each child, and to living out their motto Together we learn, together we play. The vision is lived out daily through: the nurturing relationships at all levels; the honest and rigorous process of self-evaluation; the programme of learning opportunities for staff and parents; and the well-resourced, stimulating and enabling learning environment.

ETI will continue to work with Glenbrook Nursery School, including to share examples of highly effective practice from which others may learn. The aspect of practice which should be shared more widely is:

- the creation of an enabling, inclusive learning environment which promotes the development of the children's independence, curiosity and creativity.

5. APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: QUANTITATIVE TERMS

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

The Education and Training Inspectorate

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